

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



BALLOON MARKETING

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha discusses an offering that one brings when repenting after stealing and swearing falsely about it. (Vayikra 5,21) This leads us to the following true story.

Yehuda lived in a large Jewish community. One day he went shopping in the commercial district of his city. He parked his car and went into one of the stores on the block.

After he finished shopping he walked out and saw that every car on the street had a brightly colored helium balloon tied to its mirror. Each balloon said, "Grand Opening Sale At Elchonon Electronics".

It was clear that the owner of Elchonon Electronics made the presumption that it was fine to use everyone's mirrors as a platform for his advertising.

As Yehuda came to his car he tried to untie



DRAWING CLOSER

The Book of Vayikra is the Book that introduces us to the korbanos. Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch explains how the common translations of korban misrepresent what the korban actually is. Before we begin, what is a korban? A korban is an animal, bird or flour that is brought to the Beis HaMikdash for the sake of offering it up on the mizbeiach, the Altar. The most common translation for korban is sacrifice. This word implies giving up something of value for a greater cause; whether it be life and money and receiving nothing in return. The other common translation is offering. This word implies a gift of value to the recipient as one offers an offering to the recipient. An offering is a form of gift for the benefit of the recipient. Both of these translations corrupt the understanding of what a korban actually is.

The word korban derives from karov, to be in close proximity. L'karev is the verb of bringing someone or something close. The function of the korban is to assist the one who brings it, to move closer to HaShem. It is the vehicle by which Man draws himself closer to his Maker. It is exclusively for the benefit of the one who brings it. Although HaShem cherishes those who draw themselves close to Him, nevertheless, He derives nothing of value whatsoever from the korban itself. In the first chapter of Isaiah, Yishayahu chastises his people in the name of HaShem, "For what do I need your plentiful korbanos..." The prophet is telling his people that HaShem has no benefit from the korban other than the closeness that it generates between the one who brings it and HaShem. Since the people were actually moving away from HaShem in the

the balloon on his mirror. He felt a twinge of annoyance. "No one asked me if they could tie a balloon on my mirror," Yehuda thought to himself. "I wonder if this is stealing. Was he allowed to do that? On one hand, perhaps he is benefiting and is not really causing any damage. But on the other hand, he should have asked before he tied balloons to everyone's mirror."

After Yehuda untied the balloon, he stuffed the balloon in the back seat of his car, figuring that he would give it to one of his children. But then he realized that he had three girls. If only one got a balloon the rest would be jealous. Yehuda then went down the block to the next car with the balloon. "I'm sure it's fine for me to take a couple of extra balloons for my daughters from these other cars," he thought to himself. "It's not like the owners of the cars own the balloons. They didn't make a kinyan (acquisition) on the balloons yet."

But before Yehuda untied the second balloon, he felt a twinge of doubt. Was it ok for him to take the others' balloons? Perhaps they would be annoyed. Perhaps it was stealing from them. But on the other hand, it's not like the owners of the cars made an acquisition on the balloons. Maybe it was fine.

So Yehuda went home with two questions:

Was it permitted for the store owner to tie a balloon to every car?

And was it permitted for Yehuda to take two extra balloons from the other cars on the block?

What do you think?

See Upiro Matok Bereishis 145



“We all have battles to fight. It is in those battles that we are often most alive; it is on the frontlines that we learn wisdom, create joy, forge friendships, discover happiness, and do purposeful work.”

days of Yishayahu, the korban is worthless. Rav Hirsch concludes his discussion with no word that properly translates korban.

Last Shabbos our community lost a very great man, Lev Komarov. A fellow short in physical stature but a giant in spiritual stature. He was a regular at BJSZ and was a soft spoken man, admired by all who knew him. (Some folks knew him as the fellow who drove collectors around.) Part of his greatness was his humility and how he kept himself hidden. He viewed himself as just a simple Jew; nothing special.

Even those who knew Lev well, like myself, did not know that he held a PhD from Moscow University in mechanical engineering and held a high position in that role in the former Soviet Union. When Lev came to America an opportunity opened up for him to continue his career somewhere

in middle America. However, for Lev there was no choice but to settle in Baltimore. He wanted to live in a Jewish community. He was a Jew, he lived to be a Jew and wanted to raise a Jewish family. Although his degree was in mechanical engineering, that was not who he was.

As a child he celebrated Shabbos at home and attended a cheder in Romania before the War. After the war and after losing his parents he married and moved to Moscow. He longed for the days of his childhood when he celebrated Shabbos. Alas, he did not have the opportunity. Upon his arrival to Baltimore in 1989 he rejoiced at his first Shabbos seuda at the home of Lonnie Shavitz. He was moved to tears when he realized that he was able to return to his Jewish past. When Lev rejected the offer to restart his career by moving to middle America, he did not sacrifice anything. There was nothing he wanted but to move closer to HaShem with his people in his new Jewish community.

Lev understood what a korban is and lived his life accordingly. May his memory be a blessing.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE SIX-COLORED GOULDIAN FINCH

Last week we learned about the Tachash, the mysterious animal that has six colors. Are there any animals alive today with six colors that might give us a mental image of what the colors of the tachash may have looked like?

Actually, there are. Let's look at one of the most colorful animals in the world, the Gouldian Finch, a bird that has six bright colors. (To be clear I don't want to suggest that this is what the tachash looked like, but rather to give an example of an animal today with six colors).

The Gouldian finch was named by the British ornithologist John Gould in honor of his deceased wife Elizabeth. It is also known as the Lady Gouldian Finch, because it was named after Mrs. Gould. Since it has nearly all of the colors of the rainbow, it is also known as a Rainbow Finch.

The Gouldian finch is native to Australia and they are considered to be one of the jewels of the nation of Australia.

Gouldian finches are about 5.5 inches long and show the colors of Red, Orange, Green, Blue, Purple, and Black. Both genders are brightly colored but the females tend to be less brightly colored. Not only are the Gouldian finches extremely colorful, but they sing beautifully as well. The adult Gouldian finch song is regarded as one of the most musical and melodious in nature. Only the male explicitly sings, but both genders can produce chirps, hisses, clicking, and trills to communicate with each other. Scientists say that the intensity of the male's colors and song might serve the purpose of signaling to the female the bird's strength and health.

Gouldian finches are not loud or noisy, and they are generally steady and easygoing. They usually communicate through a series of trills and soft chirps, hisses, and low-pitched clicking sounds.

The Gouldian finch is a seed eater. They eat up to 35% of their body weight each day. Like many other species of finch, the bird's strong beak is perfectly designed for cracking open and eating seeds. Gouldian finches mainly feed on ripe and half-ripe grass seeds. They usually do not eat insects. The Gouldian finch lives about five years in the wild, but it could potentially live up to eight years if properly treated and cared for.

The Gouldian finch is a social species. Outside the breeding season, Gouldian finches often join up with flocks of other types of finches, such as long-tailed finches and masked finches. Flocks can consist of up to 1,000–2,000 individuals.

Gouldian finches are monogamous and form long-lasting pair bonds.

When a male is courting a female, he bobs about and ruffles his feathers in an attempt to show off his bright colors. He will expand his chest and fluff out the feathers on his forehead. He will also expand his bright purple chest while holding his tail erect. If the female is attracted she will respond by wiping the male's beak.

Gouldian finches will usually make their nests in tree holes or holes in termite mounds. Several pairs may share a single hollow. When the eggs hatch, both parents care for the young. When the chicks are born, they hatch without any feathers or down.

In the picture above, (**top right**), you will see that the chicks have special blue, pearlescent (not "fluorescent") papillae, or nodules, at the corners of their beak. What is the purpose of these mysterious nodules? The answer is fascinating. Because the baby Gouldian finches are raised in the dark hollows of a tree, how can the mother properly feed them? Therefore Hashem designed these shiny nodules for the young finches. They are light reflectors, similar to the reflectors you find on the back of a bicycle, that reflect light and help the parents find the hungry mouths in the dark.

Young Gouldian finches first leave the nest after about 20 days and are completely independent at 40 days old. Juveniles look completely different from adults. Instead of having six colors, they are a greenish gray. They don't get their more colorful plumage until they are between eight months and one year old.

Millions of these finches once lived across Australia. Between the years 1934 and 1939, the Gouldian finch was the most exported single finch species. But the number of Gouldian finches has decreased quite dramatically during the 20th century. In general, Gouldian finches are susceptible to diseases and viral infections. Their beautiful colors mean that they are easily caught by predators. Wildfires that occur during the dry season are also one of the primary threats to their natural populations. These fires destroy the birds' native habitat and take away their food.

The Gouldian finch is also preyed upon by feral cats, hawks, and snakes. They are most likely to fall victim to predators within the first several weeks of life before they have become fully independent.

Because of the rapid loss of the Gouldian finch population, Australia banned trapping and exportation in the 1980s. It is now illegal to export these birds from Australia. Today, only about 2,500 mature Gouldian finches remain in the wild. The species is classified as Near Threatened (NT) on the IUCN Red List but its numbers today are stable.

SPECIAL, UNIQUE INSIGHTS FROM TORAH ON THE ROAD

The study of Torah encompassed the Gerer Rebbe, Rav Simcha Bunim Alter's, entire being. It was the nucleus around which all other facets of his life revolved. Like all talmidei chachamim, he would review orally and dwell on Torah thoughts at all times, even when he was walking or traveling. This was in fulfillment of the passuk, "... and you shall speak divrei Torah when you are sitting in your house and when you are going on your way...."

Rav Simcha Bunim, also known as the Lev Simcha, however, had a deeper understanding of that passuk. According to his interpretation, the actual places where the Torah is studied generates different insights, unique to the place and situation where it was studied. The Torah's intention, therefore, is not simply to command us to speak divrei Torah at all times, which may just happen to include our walking, going to sleep and rising in the morning.

Rather, the Torah is telling us that there is a special mitzvah to speak divrei Torah while walking, while going to sleep and while rising in the morning, because the insights attained at those junctures cannot be attained when one learns Torah in the beis hamedrash. Torah learned while sitting at home has its own unique insights, as does Torah learned while performing other mundane activities.

Therefore, in addition to learning "while sitting in one's house," the Lev Simcha made a point of learning "while going" as well. He gathered insights to his Torah learning which came from his home and Beis hamedrash as well as those that came from his daily walks and other travels.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the check for the wedding gift, Rav Zilberstein answers as follows. We have a principle, of Hamotzie Mechaveiro Alav Haraya, which means that if one wants to extract from another, he must first bring proof. In this case, the arguments of the son that the check was a mistake, are not proof, but only an Umdena, (similar to circumstantial evidence). An Umdena does not have the power to extract something from the holder. Therefore the young couple can cash and keep the check.

The printing of this week's TableTalk is dedicated to the memory of our dear mother, grandmother and great grandmother
Mrs. Eleanor Kolinsky, z'l

חיה בת אברהם

May the merit of hundreds and hundreds of Shabbos tables graced with beautiful Shabbos conversations be a zechus for the aliyah of her neshama.

Rosalyn and Franklyn Snitow and family

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